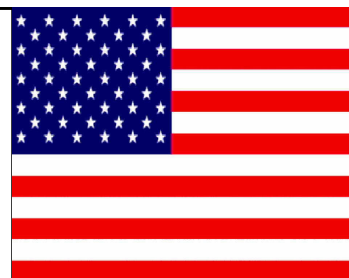


IGET-NETWORK NEWSLETTER



International Gifted Education Teacher- Development Network (IGET-Network)



BRIEF OVERVIEW OF IGET-NETWORK

The International Gifted Education Teacher Development Network, also known as Iget-Network, is a membership organization co-founded in Johannesburg, South Africa by five culturally diverse and accomplished educators. Established in 2007, the network is essentially an outgrowth of the elective course, "Education for Diverse Gifted Learners" taught for two years to final year teacher education students graduating from the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). Education for Diverse Gifted Learners introduces students to the historical literature as it relates to identifying culturally diverse gifted learners, and it includes instruction on the philosophy and psychology of educating diverse groups of gifted learners. The course, having an American historical perspective on culturally diverse gifted learners, presented Wits teacher practice students with a foundation to gifted education that in many respects are applicable within the South African context.

Iget-Network also emerged from the understanding that in present day South Africa, education policy does not address gifted education for any group of learners.

Iget-Network, the only one of its kind in the United States, South Africa (where our international efforts began) and the Caribbean, is also a result of data collected from practicing teachers and numerous conversations with enlightened and knowledgeable educators within the Johannesburg area community.

Our membership consists of dedicated and committed individuals from the United States, South Africa and the Caribbean. Membership is open to professional educators, gifted education specialists, science specialist/teachers, school administrators, community leaders, parents and student teachers. (Continued on Page 2)



Joy(ce) Maria Scott, Ph.D.
Founding Executive Director
Iget-Network

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Issue 1, December 2008/January 2009

Iget-Network Program & Services:

- Teacher Development Seminars on recognizing and nurturing the talents of exceptional learners
- Consultation with Education department and school districts on establishing gifted education programs
- Consultation with local and International Businesses on:
 - Teacher Education Student Teacher Exchange
 - Cyberspace Mentorship program
 - Needs Assessments by country
 - Counseling for the College Bound
 - Parent Forums & Involvement
 - Community Involvement
 - Children's Global Pen Pals
 - Graduate Student Research Support

Our fundamental mission is to create teacher training programming that is sustainable. At present, the network has evolved to include three major components: 1) teacher program development;--essentially teacher development seminars; 2) student development--essentially enrichment programs; and 3) community relations development--that essentially include business involvement, family support and higher education initiatives.

We believe that embracing best practices in Gifted Education will improve the method of educational delivery, enhance teacher development practices, and positively influence student achievement for the benefit of all learners in the developing nations served by Iget-Network. Our belief is based on a solid foundation in knowing that when curriculum is designed to match student learning styles, and teachers learn to teach in manners that bring out the best in students and are willing to share their methods across classrooms, student achievement improves. We also believe that the long term effects of such innovations will be measured in the enthusiasm and excitement teachers will have for the teaching and learning experience. In time, student achievement gains will be measurable throughout all of the schools that have participated in Iget-Network programming.

Finally, a major goal of the Network is to obtain funds that would strengthen the network's ability to initiate a program comparable to a highly successful gifted educational program in the United States, U-Stars~Plus (Using Science, Talents and Ability to Recognize Students--Promoting Learning for Under-represented Students). This program specializes in early recognition and nurturing of outstanding potential in underprivileged children. Since gifted education is not yet fully embraced in South Africa, it is critical that the Network continuously recruit additional South African stakeholders: scholars, educators, and parents. We welcome new members today!

BEAULIEU PREP CONNECTION-- MRS. NOELE HILLEN

Beaulieu Preparatory School, situated in Johannesburg, South Africa, is proud to be a founding partner of the IGET-Network. Our involvement came about when the Head of the School, Mrs Noele Hillen, met Dr. Joy Scott perchance in the Kruger Park when she was holidaying here several years ago. We got to talking and have been talking ever since. We are profoundly interested in Gifted Education for disadvantaged students because as you will know, South Africa has a legacy of disenfranchisement with which it is still dealing, more than 14 years after our democracy was born. There are still millions of children of school going age in this country who do not have access to acceptable schooling and much work lies ahead in addressing this on a National scale.

Beaulieu Preparatory school is a young independent school (<http://www.beaulieuprep.co.za/>). We are members of the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA), which is an inclusive organization of schools (see www.isasa.org). Many schools in the organization have outreach programmes and financial assistance or bursary schemes for disadvantaged students. One of our most difficult challenges is to identify students who have the exceptional capacity and leadership ability to benefit optimally from a good education. We know that many disadvantaged children are gifted in some way, but this is masked by a lack of exposure, experience and resources. IGET has the skills to share with teachers and administrators on how to identify gifted students who would benefit from our programmes.

We see a time when disadvantaged gifted students are identified and brought into Independent schools in South Africa (like Beaulieu Prep and perhaps the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy) and in this way thousands of children can be reached. Although we realize that we cannot change the reality for the majority of the children in our country overnight, we should all be involved in making the changes we can make - in the way of the Starfish Principle.



Mrs. Noële Hillen,
Headmistress,

Beaulieu Preparatory School, South Africa
Co-Founder, Iget-Network

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND'S INSTITUTIONAL LINK WITH IGET-NETWORK - DR. RUKSANA OSMAN

IGET-Network aims to bring together educators interested and committed to inclusive education for diverse gifted learners. A question that faces educators is: given different learning needs is it possible to include all learners? This is an ongoing debate throughout the world. There are some who believe that it is not possible to provide a quality education for all children in the same class or in the same school. Such views are important and need to be engaged with if inclusive education is to become a reality for all learners in South Africa.

It is our view that inclusive education is a possibility if we recognize that schooling is the joint responsibility of the parents, guardians, school, curriculum advisers and the community. Firstly, in view of the low personnel and financial resource base, effective support for gifted children so that they are fully included requires that we as guardians, parents and communities come together to hold the state to its promises of inclusion enshrined in legislations and policies. Secondly, it is crucial for the family, the school and the community to work in partnership. These are key sites where adults are close to children for extended periods and can therefore have a relatively enduring and repeated influence on children's learning and development at different phases. Thirdly, if we acknowledge that inclusive education is not just about placing all children under one roof, but about whole school development then it may be possible to begin to attend to the needs of gifted children in a way that is fair and just. In the final analysis such a partnership has the potential of holding the state accountable for the provision of free and inclusive education for all children.

A community-based approach to inclusion is a central feature of inclusive schools. It makes schools accessible and caring learning environments in which children who are recognized as gifted can also learn and thrive. This is a key component to Iget-Network programmatic efforts. Parents and guardians are an integral part of such schools and through their participation they are positioned to defend both their rights and those of their child. This ultimately increases the family's role in decision-making and governance in schools.

Parents of gifted children are especially encouraged to become involved in their child's learning. Iget-Network seminars are designed to provide families with the tools needed to help guide children in the process of accessing higher level critical thinking

skills, skills that go beyond outcome based learning.

One of the central challenges within inclusive education is how to create a true sense of belonging for the gifted learner and how to provide appropriate teacher support. This coupled with a shortage of curriculum advisors throughout the country, with some provinces in dire need, has the potential of making inclusive education for the gifted a faint hope. Belonging and support, which are basic human rights, are being turned into rights that have to be earned. It is here that the Network through its various initiatives has a role – that of teacher development and support.

If inclusive education (enshrined in policies and legislation in South Africa) is to become a reality for diverse gifted learners, emerging networks between teachers, teacher educators, schools, parents and guardians is quite essential for South Africa.



Ruksana Osman, Ph.D.

**Co-Founder and Department Chair ,
Division of Educational Studies, School of Education,
University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa**

Wisdom Quote

"Children are our most precious gift and nurturing each child's potential is critical to the world's wellbeing. The work being done through the Iget-Network helps us all remember that it takes a village and that today the village is worldwide!"

*Mary Ruth Coleman, Ph.D.
Senior Scientist, FPG Child Development Institute
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Past President of the Council for Exceptional Children*

STUDENT-TEACHER/TEACHER/ SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR EXCHANGE

The Student Teacher/Teacher/School Administrator exchange component of Iget-Network is ready to go. This program is designed to promote learning exchanges for university enrolled student teachers, employed teachers and school administrators. Exchanges will take place within the United States, Southern Africa and the Caribbean. Exchanges will consist of contractual agreements between select colleges and universities and local schools. For example, teachers will select schools of particular grade levels, schools by country of interests, and individual career goals and objectives.

UPCOMING ONLINE GIFTED COURSE

Beginning 2009, Iget-network intends to launch a series of fully accredited gifted education university level courses designed for teacher education students, beginning and seasoned teachers, education department administrators and others. These courses, taught by credentialed gifted and multicultural education experts will coincide with each of the four Iget-Network seminar levels, and also curricular generally commissioned by school districts and education departments.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

As **Iget-Network** is a newly established organization, and the only one of its kind in the United States, South Africa (where our international efforts began) and the Caribbean. There is no cost to join.

At present the only requirement is that you are recommended by a current **Iget-Network** member, or have in mind an area among our list of programs and services where you can share your own gifts and talents, expertise, knowledge, skills and abilities to help keep the network alive and viable. Additionally, fundraising is critical to the network's survival. Please read our "Contributions and Donations" page on our website.

See www.iget-network.org

CYBERSPACE MENTORING PROGRAM- SALLY HUANG-NISSEN

The purpose of Iget-Network Cyberspace Mentoring Program is to connect primary and secondary school teachers around the world to American (or international) gifted education specialists/experts who will provide guidance, support and alternative teaching methods. Countries that we currently focus on are within Southern Africa and the Caribbean. The very first question asked of us is exactly what is cyberspace mentoring. Cyberspace mentoring is a method of creating opportunities for individuals to communicate via the various internet mediums when geographical distance and time zone difference might otherwise limit communication. In the case of Iget-Network, individuals signed up to mentor teachers are able to establish exchanges with mentees primarily through email. Although, participants may maintain contact with other forms of communication programs such as Skype – a free download-able software that allow users to make free computer to computer long-distance calls.

Who is eligible to participate in the Iget-Network Mentorship Program?

---Mentees: *Beginning teachers, teachers currently employed in a Southern African or Caribbean primary or secondary school; and final year teacher education program students may participate. The online application will ask for demographic information and the name of the school where the Mentee teaches.*

---Mentors: *We invite highly experienced and knowledgeable gifted education specialists and experts in the field of gifted education. The online application will ask for education and experience in gifted education field.*

The Iget-Network cyberspace mentoring program is the first of its kind in the United States, South Africa and the Caribbean. By volunteering to regularly answer email replies to even one South African teacher, say, only once a week, mentors can truthfully make a difference in the lives of thousands of teachers and children.

Sally Huang-Nissen
Cyberspace Mentorship
Program Director



GIFTEDNESS & SEMINARS- DR. JOY L. DAVIS

A major goal of Iget-Network is to prepare and teach international classroom teachers in best practices in gifted education.

Our network does not subscribe to one single definition of giftedness. Rather, we encourage school personnel, teachers, parents, education departments and other institutions to participate in a series of expert led seminars where such definitions are developed with colleagues. It is our aim to share strategies that can be aligned with the focus and mission of schools around the world. Iget-Network lectures and seminars support the use of multiple criteria as identifying measures.

Our expert consultants have over thirty combined years of experience at the elementary, secondary, higher education, university and state agency levels as practitioners, researchers and teachers. Our primary goal is to help teachers learn to recognize and nurture the potential of exceptional children and youth from culturally diverse populations, particularly those in developing nations.

Our training models are interactive and hands-on, engaging participants to a full exposure of research-based best practices that have been successful for the past two decades with economically disadvantaged, culturally diverse and limited English proficient gifted learners in the United States.

OUR TRAINING:

Level I---introduction involves making a case for gifted education in the targeted country. It includes an examination of theory, research, history, philosophy, definition and practice as these relate specifically to culturally diverse gifted learners. As Level I provides the foundation to the study and practice of gifted education it is a prerequisite to all subsequent seminars. Designed for all educators and parents.

Level II---Provides in-depth examination and analysis of characteristics of gifted learners as these relate to early recognition and identification with specialized teacher observation instruments, multiple criteria and case study critique. Designed for all educators and parents.

Level III---This seminar provide participants with best practice instructional techniques and strategies.

Examples of actual demonstration and practice of classroom differentiation and other strategies are included. Designed specifically for the classroom teacher and teacher education students.

Level IV---At this level, teachers, administrators and other concerned stakeholders (parents, community leaders) will engage in development of extra-curricular instructional programs that extend beyond the classroom setting. Such programs may include the design of specialized secondary school programs, after-school or weekend enrichment programs, talent search programs, family/ community involvement programs and other support services for identified learners. These support services are key to success and sustainability of program services.

Previous seminar participants have the following to say about Iget-Network seminars:

"This seminar was quite beneficial to me as a 21st century teacher-to be, I found it very interesting and I do look forward to using the strategies learned in my classroom"

"This seminar was really needed. It was eye-opening, instructive and helpful"

"I enjoyed the seminar. It is timely as we are now addressing special needs children"

"Very informative seminar and it peaked my interest in carefully observing my students"

(The University of the Southern Caribbean- Trinidad, June 2008).



Joy L. Davis, Ed.D.
Associate Director, Iget-Network
(USA & Caribbean)

UPDATES AND UPCOMING NEWS- EMMANUEL OJO

"Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that?"

We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost,

must be attained."

Marie Curie (French Physicist, twice winner of the Nobel Prize, 1867-1934)

The International Gifted Education Teacher-Development Network (Iget-Network), the first of its kind in the USA, Africa and the Caribbean, is a membership organization with a focus on the identifying culturally diverse gifted learners and promoting best practices in the field of gifted education. It is an organization with very strong beliefs that, the future of any society lies within its children and teacher effectiveness help gifted and talented children reach their full potential. To this end, Iget-Network has decided to regularly publish a quarterly newsletter. The current edition features various columns including highlights of the Cyberspace Mentoring Program and articles from network co-founders (*Issue 1, November/December 2008*). The newsletter will be a platform for information and education for all involved in the education of our children, including parents and teachers.

We are pleased to inform you that Iget-Network has been tremendously successful with the launching of its first seminar in Trinidad last June, hosted by the President's Office of the University of the Southern Caribbean. We seek to expand all of our activities throughout the African continent, but especially so here in South Africa where Iget-Network efforts began. To help sustain this course on reaching culturally diverse gifted learners through teacher development, we are excited to announce that Drs. Joyce M. Scott, Ruksana Osman and Joy L. Davis and Ms. Keitumetse Phasumane, a former Wits teacher education student now teaching in her own classroom, are currently writing a children's book. The book series, which will be published in the eleven official languages of South Africa focuses on how teachers, family members, the community and peers can help support the child who stands out as "gifted" or different because of his/her exceptional abilities.

We welcome Iget-Network membership. At present membership is open without cost to educators, community members, students, parents, business leaders, teachers and frankly, anyone interested in supporting efforts that help promote the exceptional abilities of young children. We are especially interested in membership from individuals willing to offer expertise in their professional area. A mission of the network is to help prepare our exceptional children for leadership roles in corporations, government and state education departments.

So, please come on board if your interests and beliefs are highly consistent with ours. We know that adults must take the initiative to guide children the most efficient and effective way possible. By doing so we help to better ensure that all that the child is intended to be in life becomes a reality.

We welcome individual stories about the gifted children in your local community.

Year 2009 promises to be a year full of activities that will involve your participation and support. Information on upcoming Iget-Network seminars and online courses will be provided as they become available. Future newsletter issues will highlight upcoming conferences related to gifted education.

In concluding this piece, I encourage you to come on board as a member of the Iget-Network. Please send us your stories and look forward to our next edition which promises to be very informative as well as instructive.

Thank You.



Emmanuel Ojo
Associate Director, Iget-Network
(South Africa)

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We want to thank the following persons who are the founding members and member visionaries:

- Mrs. Irene Andrei, Founding Member--Gauteng Department of Education
- Dr. Mary Ruth Coleman, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
- Dr. Joy L. Davis, The College of William and Mary
- President Trevor M. Gardner, University of the Southern Caribbean
- Ms. Sally Huang-Nissen, Intercultural Communications – Huang & Associates
- Mrs. Noele Hillen, Founding Member Beaulieu Preparatory School
- Ms. Nongaka Khass, University of the Witwatersrand
- Mr. Misheck Ndebele, Founding Member --University of the Witwatersrand
- Mr. Emmanuel Ojo, University of the Witwatersrand
- Dr. Ruksana Osman, University of the Witwatersrand
- Dr. Joyce M. Scott, Founding Member and Visiting Professor, University of the Witwatersrand

Wisdom Quotes

"There are some whose perceptions and actions lead them to focus on the "at-risk" nature of human beings and their gifted potential. This view tends to limit what we see and what we do with these potentially gifted learners. At the same time, there are others, like myself, who believe that all learners are born with some unique gift and talent and, therefore, tend to focus their efforts on liberating and transforming the "at-promise" nature of all human beings. Fortunately, I am joined by all of those associated with the Iget Network in believing in the latter."

Dr. James M. Patton, Professor of Leadership and Special Education, The College of William and Mary.

PICTURE GALLERY OF IGET-NETWORK PAST EVENTS



University of the Witwatersrand's Teacher Education Students who took the course on Educating Culturally Diverse Gifted Learners in 2007



The University of the Witwatersrand's School of Education Boyce Block Artistry

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

1. Mr. Joseph Becker-Gifted Students Director, Golda Meir – Wisconsin
2. Dr. Pamela Clinkenbeard, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
3. Mrs. Jackie Drummer, Wisconsin Association of Talented and Gifted
4. Dr. Noma Gwalla-Ogisi, University of Wisconsin
5. Mr. Thomas Hanley-School Principal-Golda Meir School for Gifted & Talented (MPS)
6. Dr. Kaylene Gebert, Executive Vice President-Middle Tennessee State University
7. Dr. Shirley Kelly--University of Wisconsin
8. Mrs. Khumi Truth Khaas, Limpopo School District
9. Mrs. Loggie Lehlogonolo Khaas, Limpopo School District
10. Dr. Paula Olszewski-Kubilius , Director- Center for Talent Development, Northwestern University
11. Ms. Linda Lauper-Gifted & Talented Resource Specialist-Wisconsin
12. Mrs. Mapule Elizabeth Makgoba, Kianana Primary School – Olifantsfontein
13. Dr. Azwihangwisi Edward Muthivhi, University of the Witwatersrand
14. Mrs. Phodisho (Mpho) Muthivhi, Barnato Park High School, Johannesburg
15. Mrs. Jacqueline Ndebele, Asteri Public Primary School-Johannesburg
16. Mr. Okpara Heru Nosakhere, Educational Management Associates
17. Pastor Pius and Mrs. Joy Oba, Unity Model Parish-Johannesburg
18. Mrs. Sneha Shah-Coltrane, University of North Carolina Chapel
19. Dr. Diana Slaughter-Defoe, Constance E. Clayton Professor of Urban Education, University of Pennsylvania

Wisdom Quotes

"We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained"

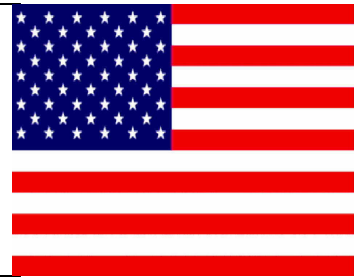
Marie Curie quotes (French Physicist, twice winner of the Nobel Prize, 1867-1934)

"A gifted teacher is as rare as a gifted doctor, and makes far less money."

Source Unknown



International Gifted Education Teacher- Development Network (IGET-Network)



CONTACT US

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Teacher-
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MISSION STATEMENT

A fundamental mission of the **International Gifted Education Teacher-Development Network (Iget-Network)** is to bring gifted education best practices, particularly those relevant to the identification and nurturance of culturally diverse learners, to developing countries where gifted education is not included within education policies. We believe that to achieve this end it is necessary to:



The statue of Nelson Mandela at the Sandton Mall.

Wisdom Quote

"Iget-Network uses their unique professional expertise to merge gifted and international educational theory and practice in ways that enrich all educators. Teaching high ability culturally diverse learners is a necessity in our educational world."

*Kaylene Gebert, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President and Provost
Middle Tennessee State University*

**LOOK FORWARD TO THE
MARCH/APRIL 2009 EDITION
OF THE NEWSLETTER**

1. Create a cyclical means by which experienced teachers enable less experienced teachers through a process of, a) acquired training and shared expertise, b) support systems that cross international borders, and c) opportunities that equip them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to recognize and nurture outstanding potential of children who by circumstance have gone unrecognized. One fundamental medium teachers use to recognize student exceptionalities is through a rigorous but relevant science curriculum that also include family involvement activities that enhance student skill development in the home setting
2. Offer children the continuity of hands-on science and literacy development enrichment activities that nurture their interests and higher level abilities. Such development would enable students to pursue leadership, higher education opportunities and other possibilities beyond the environs from which they come.
3. Offer student- teacher and teacher exchanges with international gifted education specialists (Wits School of Education, Beaulieu Preparatory School)
4. Follow the child protégé progress from primary school to college selection. Learners will enter select feeder schools, participate in after school and Saturday enrichment opportunities and college selection counseling